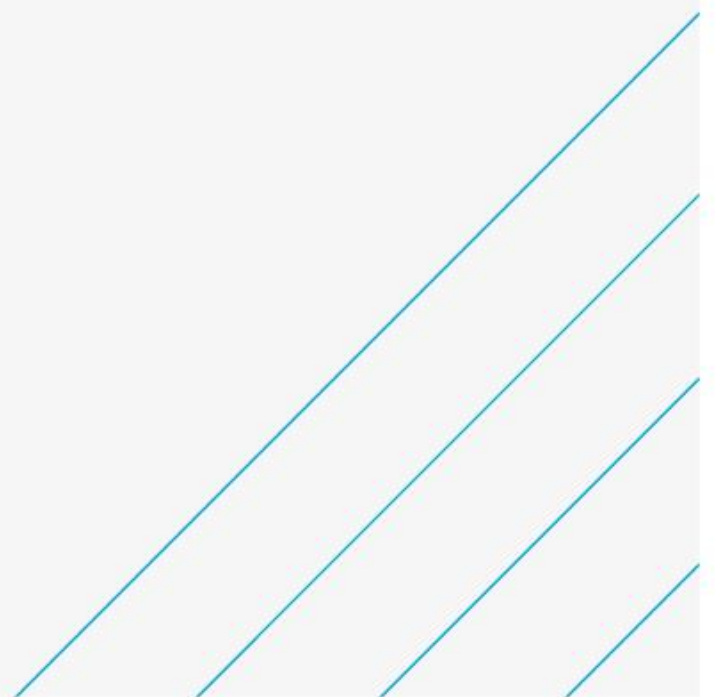


Active Travel Infrastructure – Horseshoe Bridge (Mullaghmatt)

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Monaghan County Council

October 2023



Notice

This document and its contents have been prepared and are intended solely as information for Monaghan County Council and use in relation to Active Travel Infrastructure – Horseshoe Bridge (Mullaghmatt).

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1. Introduction

Monaghan County Council have appointed Atkins to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report for an active travel infrastructure development consisting of a pedestrian footbridge within Monaghan town.

The Horseshoe bridge is located on the southwest side of the of the Monaghan town centre within the vicinity of residential lands, carrying Park Road over the Ulster canal.

The development's overall aim is to ensure the sustainable development of Monaghan Town by providing essential road infrastructure, including cycling facilities and smarter travel opportunities. These provisions will improve access to the town centre and facilitate commuting journeys for work and education, benefiting both the resident population and visitors to the town.

This report reflects the requirements of the Planning and Development Regulations (2001-2023) and accordingly contains:

- a) A plan sufficient to identify the land;
- b) A description of the development, including in particular:
 - i. a description of the physical characteristics of the development and, where relevant, of demolition works;
 - ii. a description of the location of the development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected;
- c) A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;
- d) To the extent the information is available, a description of any likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment resulting from:
 - i. the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and
 - ii. the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity; and
- e) Such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make, including any features of the Proposed Development or any measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.

1.1. Requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment

In order to determine whether the proposed development is categorised as an "EIA development", reference to the EIA Regulations is required.

EIA development falls into two Schedules in the EIA regulations. EIA is mandatory for developments listed within Schedule 5, Part 1, while Schedule 5, Part 2 developments require EIA if they would be "likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location".

Criteria to evaluate whether significant impacts on the receiving environment will arise from a proposed development are listed under Schedule 7 of the relevant Planning & Development Regulations (2001-2023). A list of the relevant information to be provided by the applicant or developer for the purposes of sub-threshold EIA screening is presented in Schedule 7A of the Regulations.

As set out under the relevant legislation, there are three key steps when carrying out EIA screening for a particular development.

- **Step 1** is to determine if the proposed infrastructure works represent a development as understood by the Directive and if a mandatory EIAR is required. Such developments are defined in Article 4 of the EIA Directive and set out in Annexes I and II of the Directive and Planning and Development Regulations (2001-2023), specifically Schedule 5, Part 1 – Development for the purposes of Part 10.
- **Step 2** is to determine whether the development exceeds a specific threshold as set out in Planning and Development Regulations (2001-2023) Schedule 5, Part 2 – Development for the purposes of Part 10 (the only type of development to which thresholds do not apply are those considered to always be likely to have significant effects and therefore require an EIAR).
- **Step 3** is to determine if the development is likely to have significant effects on the receiving environment. There are no exacting rules as to what constitutes "significant" in terms of environmental impacts. The responsibility is on Planning Authorities to carefully examine every aspect of a development in the context of characterisation of the development; location of the development and type & characteristics of potential impacts. It is generally not necessary to provide specialist studies or technical reports to complete this

screening process, rather to investigate where further studies may be required, and where risks, if any, to the integrity of the receiving environment may lie.

The purpose of this report is to determine whether the proposed bridge development requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). This screening report has been prepared to accompany a planning application from Monaghan County Council to obtain planning permission for the proposed Horseshoe Bridge (Mullaghmatt) development.

The findings of the EIA screening assessment prepared for the development has informed our professional opinion as to whether an EIAR is warranted for the proposed development, with due regard to all relevant statutory requirements and technical guidance. However ultimately it is the responsibility of the relevant planning authority to make a determination as to whether an EIAR is required for a particular development, based on screening conducted by the planning authority.

1.2. Other Relevant Guidance

In addition to the requirements of the Planning Regulations, the following guidance was also considered in the preparation of this EIA Screening Report:

- Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government (2013). Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2003). Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding sub-threshold Development. Published by the Stationery Office.
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (2018). Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2022). 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports'
- European Commission (2015). Environmental Impact Assessment – EIA, Overview, Legal context.
- European Council Directive (EU) 2014/52/EU of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private developments on the environment.
- European Council Directive (EC) 97/11/EC of 3 March 1997 amending Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private developments on the environment.
- European Council Directive (EU) 2009/31/EC on the geological storage of carbon dioxide and amending Council Directive 85/337/EEC, European Parliament and Council Directives 2000/60/EC, 2001/80/EC, 2004/35/EC, 2006/12/EC, 2008/1/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006.
- European Council Directive (EU) 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private developments on the environment.
- European Council Directive (EC) 85/337/EU of 1985 on Environmental Impact Directive.
- Environmental Resources Management (2001). Guidance on EIA Screening. Published by the European Commission.
- Statutory Instrument S.I. No. 349/1989. European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1989.
- Statutory Instrument S.I. No. 600 of 2001. Planning and Development Regulations 2001.
- Statutory Instrument S.I. No. 296 of 2018. European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018.
- Statutory Instrument S.I. No. 235/2019. Planning and Development Act 2000 Exempted Development) (No. 2) Regulation 2019.
- Statutory Instrument S.I. No. 46/2020 - Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations 2020.
- Statutory Instrument S.I. No. 692/2020 - Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020.
- Statutory Instrument S.I. No. 75/2022 - Planning and Development Act (Exempted Development) Regulations 2022.
- Statutory Instrument S.I. No. 101/2023 - Planning and Development Section 179A) Regulations 2023.

2. The Site

2.1. Site location

The proposed site is located southwest of Monaghan town centre within the vicinity of residential lands, carrying Park Road over the Ulster canal at grid reference 54.243058, -6.981040.

2.2. Site description and surroundings

The proposed bridge development is located at an existing bridge structure crossing the Ulster Canal. This bridge is bounded to the north and south by residential housing.

The proposed site is in a steep cutting. The surrounding lands are flat in nature with a level of ca. 70m Above Ordinance Datum (AOD) reported. The location of the proposed site is included in Figure 2-1.

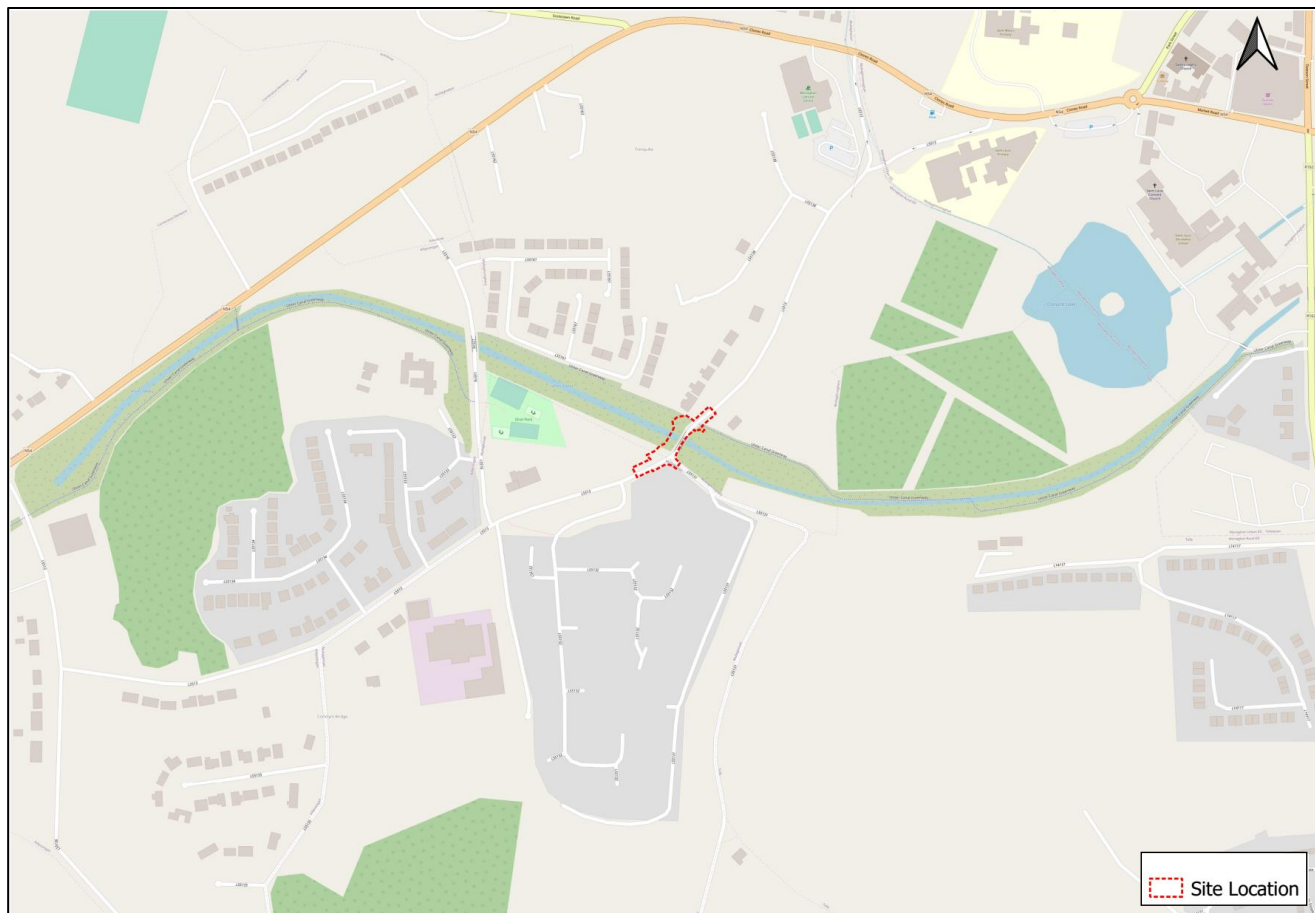


Figure 2-1 – Proposed Site Location

3. Proposed development

3.1. Overview

The proposed active travel scheme is illustrated in Figure 3-1 and outlined below:

- A new bridge will be constructed to the west of the existing Horseshoe Bridge.
- Pedestrians and cyclists traveling north-and southbound will cross the Ulster Canal via the new bridge.
- The Ulster Canal greenway crossing will be upgraded with traffic signals and additional shared space to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists on Park Road.
- A 1.6-meter-wide raised cycle track/lane will be provided north of the greenway crossing over a distance of 16.4 meters, enabling southbound cyclists to access the shared area on the eastern side of the crossing.
- A new crossing will be established on the southern side of the bridge, just before the T-junction, adjacent to the privately owned parking bays.
- Southbound cyclists will cross Park Road at the greenway crossing and follow the blue route indicated by arrows in Figure 3-1.
- Traffic signal posts will be installed at both crossings, with priority access given to pedestrians and cyclists who activate the traffic lights.
- Northbound and southbound motorists will continue to use the existing carriageway. Traffic flow across the existing structure will be regulated using a traffic signal shuttle system. The traffic signals and stop lines will be positioned just before both crossings.
- A clear zone will be painted south of the stop line of the southern crossing to prevent traffic queues at the lights from obstructing cyclists and improve visibility when entering or exiting the cycle path.
- A stop line and traffic signal will also be established at the T-junction where Mullaghmat Road intersects Park Road.

3.2. Structures

The recommended bridge structure will comprise a 27.0 m long, single span, precast beam and slab bridge deck, made integral with the abutments. The superstructure will comprise a single pretensioned W-beam with an in-situ concrete deck slab which varies in width from 3.0 m to 4.4 m to provide sufficient space for the active travel scheme and to accommodate the curved plan of the existing bridge structure. The substructure will comprise wall type abutments with earwings, founded on spread footings.

The span length was selected primarily to maintain an unobstructed view of the existing masonry structure and to ensure aesthetic continuity. The proposed structure will be separated from the existing one to avoid transferring any load onto it, thus preserving its original integrity. Furthermore, the proposed structure will not compromise the original hydraulic capacity of the existing structure.

To ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, a steel parapet handrail will be installed on the outer edge of the bridge, while the existing bridge parapet will remain on the inner edge. Additionally, a slip-resistant surfacing layer will be applied to the top surface of the deck.

After carefully evaluating several options, the precast beam and slab solution emerged as the most suitable choice for the terrain and location. Although steel deck alternatives were considered, they were ultimately ruled out due to their high maintenance demands and costs. The precast beam deck solution facilitates a swift and effortless construction process, as the beams can be easily craned into position to support the in-situ slab.

3.3. Junctions & Entrances

The Mullaghmat T-junction will undergo two modifications: the installation of a stop line and a traffic signal to accommodate the proposed active travel scheme.

3.4. Pedestrian Crossings

The two crossings on either side of the bridge shall meet the requirements of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) guidelines (Section 4.3.2) and the Traffic Sign Manual (Section 7.16).

The existing greenway crossing will remain a 4-meter-wide raised table crossing. The design will consider the repainting of road markings and matching the southern side of the bridge crossing with the greenway crossing.

3.5. Drainage

The proposed active travel scheme is unlikely to have a significant impact on the drainage of the main carriageway. The new footpaths and cycle tracks will be designed to slope away from the road and discharge into nearby grass verges. Drainage specifications for the raised footpaths and bridge deck will be developed as part of the detailed design phase.

3.6. Lighting

The proposed active travel link, comprising footpaths and cycle tracks, will be lit in accordance with current best practices and design guidelines for public lighting and wildlife sensitive.

To improve energy efficiency, the design will consider the use of LED technology for both new and existing fixtures. The details of this upgrade will be determined during the detailed design phase.

3.7. Pavements

In line with the National Cycle Manual's guidelines for providing the highest quality of service for cyclists, the design will consider the use of a smooth asphalt surface course with 10mm aggregate for the proposed raised cycle track. The shared spaces and footpaths will feature a concrete surface to create a colour-contrast with the road and cycle surfaces. The construction depth for these pavements will be determined during the detailed design phase. Moreover, to aid visually impaired pedestrians, tactile paving will be installed at the entrances of the two road crossings.

To ensure that the carriageway pavement is in good condition, a pavement condition survey will be conducted to identify whether any repair works are needed. Based on the survey results, appropriate measures will be taken to maintain the quality of the carriageway pavement, ensuring that the road remains safe and accessible for all users.

3.8. Services

Utility companies were contacted seeking information relating to their plant and ducting at the bridge and the following utilities were identified:

- Eir - underground
- Enet - underground
- ESB - Overhead
- Irish Water - underground

A Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and utility survey, which will include slit trenches for verification, will also be conducted to gather more accurate information. All necessary service protection measures and/or diversion requirements will be determined and specified in the tender documentation.

3.9. Land Take

No private land acquisition is necessary to accommodate the proposed development.

3.10. Construction

Should consent be granted, the construction programme is expected to run for 3 months. Construction is anticipated to commence in Q1 2024. The overall programme and phasing of works is still to be confirmed. The proposed construction sequence is as follows:

- Removal of trees and vegetation to allow access for construction;
- Installation of falsework (scaffolding) for maintenance of the existing masonry arch;
- Maintenance on the existing structure;
- Excavation for the installation of spread footings (including Temporary lateral shoring if required);
- Construction of spread footings and abutments;
- Installation of precast beam (including permanent formwork and formwork for deck cantilevers);
- Casting of deck top slab and diaphragms;
- Installation of handrails;
- Construction of approaches (including landscaping);
- Construction of shared area footways and raised cycle track;

- Installation of traffic signals, crossings and paint road markings;
- Finishing off road reserve and open new active travel route.

A key mechanism of managing the impact of noise and vibration will be through the adherence to site working hours as agreed with Monaghan County Council. Site working hours are expected to be as follows:

- 07:00 – 19:00 Monday-Friday
- 08:00 – 14:00 Saturday
- No noisy works should take place on Sundays or bank holidays.

Where especially noisy work is to take place, the Contractor will contact Monaghan County Council and residents who may be affected by the noise and vibrations, to inform them of the intended location and duration of works.

The construction works will be undertaken in accordance with safeguards included in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). This will ensure that construction is undertaken in line with industry best practice. The CEMP will set out a wide range of measures to avoid and mitigate potential adverse environmental effects of the development during the construction phase. Measures within would typically include, inter alia, controls over the routing of construction vehicles, hours of operation for construction and construction related activities including construction vehicles, construction noise levels, dust, drainage and the handling and disposal of potentially contaminated soil and materials.

Wastes and materials management during construction would be dealt with by a Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP). The plan will include consideration of opportunities to design out waste and improving materials efficiency with efforts made to maximise on-site reuse and off-site recycling and recovery of any construction material generated. The volume of waste arising from the proposed works is anticipated to be very low, with no impact on waste management facilities. The contractor will be responsible for preparing, implementing and reviewing the RWMP through construction (including the management of all suppliers and sub-contractors).

3.11. Operation

The core objective of the development is to provide linkage and permeability to existing and proposed active travel provision in the town centre. This will integrate with the overall active travel policy for Monaghan Town as follows:

- Provide a sustainable transport alternative for the workers;
- Facilitate students to walk/cycle to the educational campus on either side of the town. In all, over 2500 students will be facilitated by the development of the proposed link;
- Link to the existing Ulster Canal Greenway which passes through Monaghan Town. It is proposed to extend the Greenway eastwards across the border to Middletown in Co. Armagh and westwards to Clones via Smithborough, in the coming years.
- Provide a valuable leisure amenity for the local population; and
- Encourage active travel in preference to motorised travel, which will result in clear sustainability and health benefits.

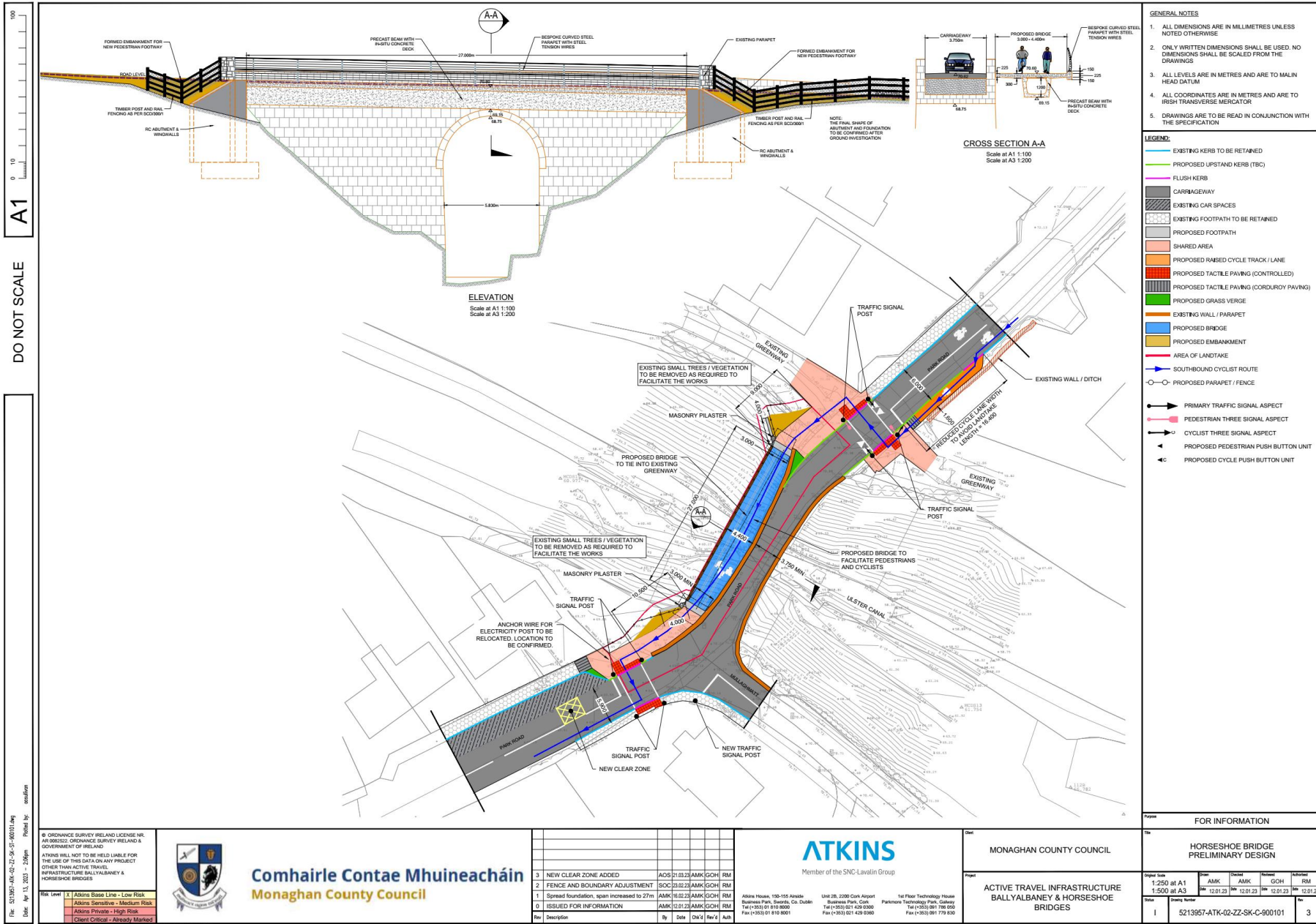


Figure 3-1 – Proposed General Arrangement

4. EIA Screening

4.1. Introduction

The following elements should be considered in determining whether the proposed infrastructure development constitutes EIA development under the Planning and Development Regulations (2001-2023):

- If the proposed development is of a type listed in Schedule 5, Part 1;
- If not, whether:
 - it is listed in Schedule 5, Part 2; and
 - any part of it is located within sensitive area; or
 - it meets any of the relevant thresholds and criteria set out in Schedule 5, Part 2; and/or
 - it would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

These points are explored further in this section with reference to the EIA regulations.

4.2. Schedule 5, Part 1 developments

EIA is mandatory for developments listed in Schedule 5, Part 1 of the EIA regulations. Schedule 5, Part 1 developments are large scale developments for which significant effects would be expected and comprise developments such as new airports and power stations.

The proposed development is not a type listed in Schedule 5, Part 1.

The proposed development is reviewed in the following section to determine whether it is a type listed in Schedule 5, Part 2.

4.2.1. Schedule 5, Part 2 developments

The development has been screened against the types of development, various processes and activities listed in Schedule 5 Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations as amended 2001-2023. The proposed development may fall within the categories outlined in Table 4-1, which provide that an EIA must be completed – subject to specified thresholds being met or exceeded.

Table 4-1 - Screening against relevant thresholds under Schedule 5, Part 2

Schedule 5, Part 2 thresholds	Proposed development
<p>10. Infrastructure developments (b) (iv) urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.</p>	<p>The proposed active travel bridge development has a site area of 0.176 hectares and does not involve an area greater than 10 hectares in a built-up area. Therefore, this development does not require an EIAR to be produced in accordance with Schedule 5 Part 2 (10) (b) (iv).</p>
<p>13. Changes, extensions, development and testing (c) Any change or extension of development being of a class listed in Part 1 or paragraphs 1 to 12 of Part 2 of this Schedule, which would result in the demolition of structures, the demolition of which had not previously been authorised, and where such demolition would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out under Schedule 7.</p>	<p>There are no significant demolition works proposed as part of the active travel bridge development. Therefore, this development does not require an EIAR to be produced in accordance with Schedule 5 Part 2 (13)(c).</p>
<p>15. Any development listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant</p>	<p>The proposed active travel bridge development is not likely to have significant effects on the environment with regard to</p>

Schedule 5, Part 2 thresholds	Proposed development
class of development, but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.	criteria set out in Schedule 7. Having regard to the scale and nature of the development and based on the above information, the overall probability of significant impacts on the receiving environment arising from the proposed scheme is considered to be low.

As the proposed development is not a type of development identified in Schedule 5 Part 1 or Part 2 of the Planning and development Regulations 2001-2023, there is no automatic requirement under the EIA directive for it to be subjected to EIA. Notwithstanding this, Monaghan County Council is a responsible developer and is committed to demonstrating that the proposed development will not result in significant effects on the environment. As such, this sub-threshold EIA Screening Report has been prepared to determine whether there are likely significant environmental effects from the proposed development on the receiving environment with regard to Schedule 7 of the Regulations.

4.3. Selection criteria for screening schedule 5 development

Schedule 7 sets out the selection criteria which relate to specific matters, including: the characteristics of the development; the location of the development; and the characteristics of the potential impact. These factors should be taken into account as part of the screening process and are set out below:

4.3.1. Characteristics of proposed development

The characteristics of developments must be considered, with particular regard to:

- a) the size and design of the whole development;
- b) cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development;
- c) the nature of any associated demolition works;
- d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;
- e) the production of waste;
- f) pollution and nuisances;
- g) the risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge; and
- h) the risks to human health.

4.3.2. Location of proposed development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by developments must be considered, with particular regard to:

- a) the existing and approved land use;
- b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,
- c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:
 - (i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;
 - (ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;
 - (iii) mountain and forest areas;
 - (iv) nature reserves and parks;
 - (v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and;
 - (vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the development, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;
 - (vii) densely populated areas;
 - (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

4.3.3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts

The likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2, with regard to the impact of the development on the factors specified in paragraph (b)(i)(l) to (V) of the definition of ‘environmental impact assessment report’ in section 171A of the Act, taking into account:

- a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- b) the nature of the impact;
- c) the transboundary nature of the impact;
- d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;
- e) the probability of the impact;
- f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;
- g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment, and
- h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

The following section sets out a review of the above criteria and requirements specifically addressing the proposed development.

4.4. Schedule 7 criteria table

4.4.1. Characteristics of the proposed development

Screening Criteria	Proposed development
Size and design of the project	
Will the size and design of the whole project be considered significant?	No. The site area is 0.176ha and is not considered significant within the sub-urban setting.
Cumulation with other project	
Will other existing project and/ or approved project be able to affect the project	<p>The proposed footbridge will provide a safe link for residents living in the town centre to this Greenway, and therefore it is considered that there will be an overall positive cumulative impact during operation.</p> <p>No existing developments, or approved development, on or around the site will affect or be affected by the development nor are there any plans for future land uses which could be affected. Monaghan Council planning database was searched on 20/10/2023.</p> <p>An objective of the proposed development is to provide a link to link the existing Ulster Canal Greenway which passes through Monaghan Town. It is proposed to extend the Greenway eastwards across the border to Middletown in Co. Armagh and westwards to Clones via. Smithborough, in the coming years. This proposal is currently at planning stage. The potential for significant negative environmental cumulative impacts during construction is considered to be low.</p> <p>As such, there are no other plans or developments within the vicinity of the proposed development which would result in significant cumulative effects within the surrounding area. No other mitigations are therefore required or proposed other than those specified in the design of the proposal.</p>
Nature of any associated demolition works	

Screening Criteria	Proposed development
Will the construction of the project include any significant demolition works	No. No significant demolition works are required.
Use of natural resources	
Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources above or below ground which are non-renewable or in short supply?	<p>The proposed development will require the removal of 10 no. immature trees / tree groups.</p> <p>The use of natural resources would be kept to a minimum; aggregates and soil would be re-used on site, where possible.</p> <p>Vegetation clearance would take place outside of the nesting season (February – August). If this is not possible, an ecologist will survey the vegetation for breeding birds no longer than 24 hours prior to clearance. If nesting birds are identified, then an alternative approach to the work will be used.</p> <p>The use of natural resources is not considered significant.</p>
Production of waste	
Will the project produce wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	<p>Construction waste would be kept to a minimum with only contaminated waste and demolition waste being removed off site. The following waste streams will be produced during the construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste produced by the construction of the cycle and pedestrian paths • Generic construction waste <p>Operation waste would be minimal and recycling facilities will be included within the proposed design where required. Prior to construction of the development, the appointed contractor will prepare a Construction Resource and Waste Management Plan (RWMP). The RWMP will provide the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes including any litter arising during the construction phase of the development.</p>
Pollution and nuisances	
Will the project release any pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	<p>Air Quality in the area has an overall rating of 'Good' (recorded in May 2021) (EPA, 2023) with the closest air monitoring station located 1.7km south of the site, in Monaghan Town (TNO3952) having '1 - Good' status. The closest National air monitoring station; Kilkitt Co. Monaghan has a '2 -Good' status during the time of writing this report. Construction traffic emissions and dust from material delivery and removal, and earthworks would be kept to a minimum. Dust management measures will be set out in the CEMP.</p> <p>The proposed development would be designed to ensure that the collection and disposal of effluent and run-off is appropriately isolated from unmade ground and porous surfaces so that the risk of a pollution incident is very low. Construction activities would be programmed to minimise potential air impacts.</p> <p>The proposed construction of an active travel route on the western side of the Horseshoe bridge and its approaches will require the removal of several trees up to 6 meters tall. These trees mainly consist of immature ash and sycamore,</p>

Screening Criteria	Proposed development
	<p>which have slender trunks due to the limited availability of light in the area.</p> <p>The design will consider that the new embankment fill is landscaped and protected with grass, and the embankments around the substructure is rehabilitated to minimize the impact of construction.</p> <p>The use of natural resources would be kept to a minimum; aggregates and soil would be re-used on site, where possible.</p> <p>Vegetation clearance would take place outside of the nesting season (February – August). If this is not possible, an ecologist will survey the vegetation for breeding birds no longer than 24 hours prior to clearance. If nesting birds are identified, then an alternative approach to the work will be used.</p> <p>The use of natural resources is not considered significant.</p>
Will the project cause:	
Noise and vibration	<p>Construction activities will produce noise and vibration which may produce an adverse impact on nearby sensitive receptors including residents of near-by properties. Construction activities will be programmed to minimise potential noise impacts to these receptors.</p> <p>Noise and vibration during operations are unlikely to significantly increase beyond the existing noise levels.</p>
Release of light	<p>The lighting will be designed to minimise the effects of light pollution on neighbouring properties. Low energy LED lighting will be used to illuminate areas.</p>
Heat	<p>The development will not cause release of heat.</p>
Energy	<p>The development will not cause release of energy.</p>
Electromagnetic radiation	<p>The development will not cause release of electromagnetic radiation.</p>
Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants, including leachate, onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or sea?	<p>The potential for accidents or incidents causing oil and chemical spillages are limited. With the adoption of site-specific risk management and remediation measures, as appropriate, during construction, no adverse impacts would arise and the residual effects on sensitive receptors would not be significant.</p>
Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the project concerned	
Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) during construction, operation or decommissioning?	<p>Ireland in general is at low risk of natural disasters: earthquakes are rare and of low magnitude, there are no active volcanos, and severe weather events are rarely experienced. Flooding is experienced throughout Ireland on a regular basis. A review of flooding maps (OPW, 2023) for the development location does not indicate a flooding risk.</p> <p>Possible accidents relevant to the development include vehicle collisions and fire, for both of which there will be plans in place to minimise the risk of harm caused by emissions or discharges.</p> <p>Major accidents affecting the development include generic risk of fire or explosion.</p> <p>All these events will be covered by risk assessments and contingency plans which apply to the proposed development. In the event of accidents or fire, measures will</p>

Screening Criteria	Proposed development
	be in place to limit emissions to land, water and air, as far as practicable. With these arrangements in place the impact of emissions on human health and sensitive receptors in general would be mitigated such that adverse impacts would be unlikely to arise in the event of an accident.
Is the location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme /adverse climatic conditions, e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	The location is not susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme/adverse climatic conditions. There has been no identified risk of flooding at the development site.
The risks to human health	
Will the project present a risk to the population (having regard to population density) and their human health during construction, operation or decommissioning? (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution)	Construction would be undertaken in accordance with the commitments to be set out in a CEMP such that no significant construction effects on construction workers, residents and the environment would arise.

In summary it is considered that the characteristics of the proposed development, indicate it would not constitute EIA development. Given the limited extent of the development, in the context of the existing site, the limited likely use of natural resources, the low volume of waste likely to arise and the inclusion, through a CEMP, of measures to mitigate adverse effects of construction activities, the characteristics of the development are not such as to be likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.

4.4.2. Location of the development

Screening Criteria	Proposed development
Existing and approved land use	
Are there existing or approved land uses or community facilities on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	<p>The proposed works are considered to be compatible with the land use in the local area. The proposed works would provide active travel opportunities to the local population.</p> <p>Residential properties are located to the north and south of the proposed development. The construction of the development could have an effect on these properties. A CEMP will be produced to identify potential environmental issues and control measures for their avoidance/mitigation.</p> <p>The contractor will inform and work with all stakeholders to address concerns. Control measures to avoid/mitigate impacts will be included in the CEMP.</p> <p>The proposed development lies within lands which are in ownership of Monaghan County Council. Lands to the north and south have been zoned by Monaghan County Council as 'Existing Residential', with lands along the Ulster Canal (beneath the proposed bridge) zoned as 'Recreation / Amenity'.</p> <p>No existing, approved land uses for health, education, or community facilities in general, on, or around, the location will be affected by the development. Access to the Public Right of Way (PRoW) will be restricted during construction and reinstated during operation.</p>

Screening Criteria	Proposed development
	<p>Horseshoe Bridge is recorded on Monaghan County Development Plan's Record of Protected Structures, ID: Local 18.</p> <p>The construction, operation or decommissioning of the development will not involve actions which will cause physical changes in the topography of the area.</p>
<p>The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground</p>	
<p>Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>Material would be imported for the works including in-fill and concrete.</p>
<p>Absorption capacity of the natural environment</p>	
<p>Are there any other areas on or around the location which has the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths?</p>	<p>There are 2no. wetland Habitats located within the vicinity; Tom Youngs Wood – Ulster Canal Wetland (WMI_MN640) ca. 340m west is described by Wetland Survey Ireland (WSI; 2023) as 'CANAL, MARSH, WET WOODLAND (OAK ASH OR WILLOW ALDER), ARTIFICIAL POND' and Convent Lake Wetland (WMI_MN486) ca. 130m east of the development, described by WSI (2023) as 'WET WOODLAND (OAK ASH OR WILLOW ALDER), ACID LAKE, SCRUB'. It is not known if these wetlands are groundwater fed and therefore if they are hydrogeologically connected to the development site, however these sites are connected to the proposed development via. the Ulster Canal. Given the scale and nature of the proposed development works there are no surface water or groundwater impacts anticipated.</p> <p>There is no potential for impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment.</p>
<p>Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to coastal zones and the marine environment?</p>	<p>The proposed development is proposed in an inland area. Given the nature and scale of the proposed works there is no potential for impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment.</p>
<p>Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to mountain and forest areas?</p>	<p>Convent Lake Wetland Habitat comprises a woodland area and is located ca.130m from the proposed development. No impacts are anticipated on this woodland site.</p> <p>There is no potential for impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment.</p>
<p>Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to areas classified or protected under national legislation; Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC?</p>	<p>A screening for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared for the development which investigated the potential for the proposed development to have significant effects on a European Site(s) either alone or in combination with other plans or developments.</p> <p>The AA screening concluded that '<i>beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed development will not, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, give rise to any impacts which would constitute significant effects on Slieve Beagh SPA (site code: 004167)</i></p>

Screening Criteria	Proposed development
	<p><i>or any other Natura 2000 sites or any UK Protected Sites, in view of their conservation objectives.'</i></p>
<p>Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure?</p>	<p>The absorption capacity of the natural environment is characterised as follows:</p> <p>The area around the proposed development is sub-urban in nature with residential property located to the north and south.</p> <p>As determined by the AA Screening (Atkins, 2023) <i>'There is only one Natura 2000 site which is hydrologically connected to the proposed works location. The proposed works site is hydrologically connected to the Slieve Beagh SPA (site code: 004167), via the Blackwater River. The proposed works site is located ca. 11km away via straight line distance and ca. 19.8km by hydrological connection via the shortest possible route. However, the proposed works site is not located upstream of this SPA. The sole qualifying interest of this SPA is Hen Harrier (Circus cyaneus) [A082]. There is no suitable habitat for Hen Harrier within the proposed works area and therefore, there will be no disturbance to this species as a result of the proposed works.'</i></p> <p>2no. Wetland Habitats; Convent Lake and Youngs Wood – Ulster Canal Wetland are hydrologically connected to the proposed development site via. the Ulster Canal.</p> <p>Leeching of pollutants to groundwater is a risk during the construction phase.</p> <p>However, best practice measures will be employed through adherence to the CEMP which will be prepared and accidental spills and silt generation will be dealt with through prescribed spill response and silt collection measures.</p>
<p>Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to densely populated areas?</p>	<p>No. There is no significant effect on the absorption capacity of the natural environment in relation to densely populated areas as a result of the proposed development. The development will result in a positive impact in terms of facilitating active travel opportunities for the local population.</p>
<p>Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or Archaeological significance?</p>	<p>Horseshoe Bridge is an Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) feature. Horseshoe Bridge is an Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) feature (41303015). An archaeological impact assessment report (Archer Heritage Planning, 2023) determined that there is 'low potential for the survival of archaeological remains' at this bridge and recommends that 'continuous Archaeological Monitoring of all ground works take place'. An architectural heritage impact assessment was prepared (Molloy & Associates Conservation Architects, 2023) which notes that <i>'No removal of northwestern wing walls or parapets are proposed. Further, the new bridge will remain structurally independent of the existing. As a consequence, no physical impacts are intended to occur in respect of physical loss of the set piece'</i>. A Principal Inspection of each bridge will be carried out prior to Construction Phase, to inspect the condition of each bridge component, identify and schedule</p>

Screening Criteria	Proposed development
	<p>defects and make recommendations in accordance with good conservation practice, for repairs, where needed. Additionally, best practice measures, along with the recommendations noted her, will be employed through adherence to the CEMP which will be prepared.</p> <p>There is no potential for impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment.</p>

In summary, it is considered that the location of the proposed development indicates that the development will not constitute EIA development. Given the existing use of land in the area around the site there are limited natural resources in terms of soil, land and water that could be affected by the proposed development.

With suitable control measures (as relevant during construction or operation) and incorporated design, there is not likely to be any significant effects.

4.4.3. Characteristics of potential impact

Screening Criteria	Proposed development
The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	
Outline the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The spatial extent of the proposed development measures 0.176 hectares. The expected duration of the construction works is approximately 3 months, the types of development identified within the vicinity of the proposed works are residential properties. Direct impacts associated with the proposed works are likely to be located within the environs of the site, chiefly associated with impacts on pedestrians and vehicular movement within the local area. Due to the nature of the proposed works it is unlikely that the resident population would be significantly affected by the development.
Nature of the impact	
Outline the nature of the impact.	There could be potential adverse construction impacts arising from temporary disruption or disturbance associated with construction activities. This has potential to result in noise and air quality impacts but with the implementation of the control measures included in the CEMP it is unlikely that impacts would give rise to significant environmental effects. Potential operational impacts from the proposed development would be from lighting. The design will be developed to reduce operational impacts by incorporating control measures. Monaghan County Council will engage with stakeholders including the adjacent residents throughout the design and construction stages to address any concerns.
Transboundary nature of the impact	
Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?	Given the location of the site no transboundary impacts would occur.
The intensity and complexity of the impact	
Outline the intensity and complexity of the impact	The impacts identified are unlikely to cause significant changes in environmental conditions within the site and surrounding area.

Screening Criteria	Proposed development
The probability of the impact	
Outline the probability of the impact	During construction, conventional construction and best environmental practice techniques can be readily deployed. In order to minimise disruption, a CEMP will be implemented. It could not be concluded that there is a high probability that adverse environmental impacts will occur. There is no significant environmental impact during the operational phase, the proposed development will have an overall positive impact as it will provide active travel opportunities and access to the Ulster Canal Greenway for the local population.
The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact	
Outline the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact	<p>It is expected that construction works will commence following receipt of the necessary statutory approvals and the duration of the works will be approximately 3 months. Normal working hours during the construction period are expected to be Monday to Friday 07:00 to 19:00, and Saturday 08:00 to 14:00. During the development it may be necessary to carry out some work outside of normal working hours however, this will be kept to a minimum and only undertaken following approval from Monaghan County Council.</p> <p>The noise and air quality impact peaks during construction will be intermittent with a potential background level of nuisance as they will depend on the construction activities which are for their nature variable and not continuous.</p> <p>The operational noise impacts caused by the proposed development will be negligible.</p> <p>The selection and implementation of established best practice procedures as set out by the appointed Contractor will ensure potential environmental impacts during the construction phase are offset.</p>
Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development	
Could this project together with existing and/ or approved project result in cumulation of impacts together during construction/ operation phase?	In the vicinity of the proposed works there are no approved developments with which cumulative impacts could arise.
Possibility of effectively reducing the impact	
What measures can be adopted to avoid, reduce, repair or compensate the impact?	The design of the active travel bridge is being developed to reduce both construction and operational impacts. During construction the impact of the proposed works would be further reduced through the implementation of the CEMP. During operation, potential impacts would be reduced by the inclusion of design measures and operational control plans.

From an assessment of the types and characteristics of the potential impacts likely to arise from the active travel bridge development it is considered it will not constitute EIA development. With the implementation of the control measures included in a CEMP during construction few impacts would be likely to arise. Those that do, would be restricted to the site and a limited area in proximity to the site and would not be significant. Apart from pedestrians and road users near the site the local population and other sensitive receptors are unlikely to be affected by construction activities.

At the operational stage, visual impacts and noise impacts are anticipated. However, with suitable mitigation and control measures incorporated into the landscape and architectural design for the station it is not considered likely that there will be any significant effects.

5. Conclusion

For the reasons set out in Section 4 above it is concluded that the proposed active travel bridge development is not a development type identified in Schedule 5 Part 1 or Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. There is no requirement under the EIA Directive for the proposed development to be subject to EIA.

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